

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**REMARKS AT UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN  
The Road to Copenhagen: Meeting the Climate Challenge  
Copenhagen, 3 October 2009**

[Salutations]  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Copenhagen has been in my thoughts every day for the past two years. I have uttered the word itself many thousands of times. So I am delighted to be back in your beautiful city.

And I am honoured by your invitation to speak on the topic of climate change.

This distinguished institution has contributed so much to the history of this country and to the world of science.

Science has provided the foundation for human progress, and it must provide the basis for our actions to combat climate change.

Less than two weeks ago, I convened a Climate Change Summit at the United Nations.

It was history's largest gathering of world leaders on climate change -- attended by 101 Heads of State and Government and including 163 countries.

Climate change -- and the imperative to reach agreement at Copenhagen -- is now at the top of the international agenda.

This is where it belongs. Put simply, climate change will rewrite the global equation for development, peace and prosperity in the 21st century.

From my first days as Secretary-General, I have urged leaders to make climate change a priority. I have argued that it is the key to addressing many other global challenges: economic growth, sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals.

Tackling climate change can set us on the road to peace and prosperity for all.

Here I wish to pay tribute to the leadership your government has shown on climate change.

Your domestic efforts to reduce emissions and your leadership as the incoming President of the Conference of Parties to the UN climate change convention, reinforce your reputation for responsible global citizenship.

Time and again at the Summit, we heard leaders signal their determination to seal a comprehensive, fair and effective deal at Copenhagen.

This was a crucial step forward on the road to Copenhagen – and not a moment too soon.

When I was in the Arctic a month ago, I saw glaciers melting at an alarming pace.

What I sense from the Summit is that finally, we are seeing a thaw in some of the frozen positions that have prevented governments from making progress in the negotiations.

The Summit helped turn up the heat – in a good way. It mobilized political will and focused the attention of world leaders on the urgent need for action.

We helped to bridge differences between developed and developing countries. We built trust by bringing them together at the same table in a serious and sustained private dialogue, including on climate financing.

Most importantly, we heard a very strong political message. All present recognized that a deal in Copenhagen was possible. Leaders showed a keen willingness to work hard to achieve this goal.

We heard from Japan, the Maldives, China, the United States and others on what they are already doing, as well as what they would be prepared to do under an international agreement.

All concurred that we need a global agreement to tackle this global issue.

A strong collective political vision emerged from the Summit. Leaders voiced broad support for setting a long-term goal to limit global temperature increase to a maximum of 2°Celsius. Some of the most vulnerable countries had argued for a maximum rise of 1.5°C.

World leaders acknowledged the scientific imperative to cut global greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050.

Finally, the Summit shone a much-needed spotlight on financing. Financing for mitigation and adaptation is a key element in building trust, and is essential for sealing a deal.

Many leaders rallied around a proposal for supporting \$100 billion per year over the next decade. Leaders agreed that, in principle, funding should derive from both public and private sources, and should be in addition to official development assistance.

I am very encouraged by movement in this area.

Excellencies,

Let us be clear about the benchmarks for a successful climate deal at Copenhagen and beyond:

First, a successful deal must involve all countries working toward a common, long-term goal to limit global temperature rise to safe levels consistent with science.

It will include ambitious emission reduction targets from industrialized countries by 2020.

It will include actions by developing countries to limit the growth of their emissions while they pursue green growth. Substantial financial and technological support will be needed to achieve this.

It will also address all major sources of greenhouse gases, including deforestation and emissions from shipping and aviation.

Second, a successful deal must strengthen the world's ability to cope with inevitable changes. In particular, it must provide comprehensive support to the most vulnerable -- those who are on the frontlines of climate impacts.

Third, a deal needs to be backed by money and the means to deliver it. Without proper financing, and without unlocking private investment, including through carbon markets, the solutions we discuss are mere fantasies.

Fourth, a deal must include an equitable global governance structure that addresses the needs of developing countries.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Heads of State and Government are now personally engaged in the search for climate solutions. Solutions that can power green growth, protect people, and preserve the planet.

Leaders have provided the blueprint and the necessary high-level political support to make ambitious progress in the negotiations.

The challenge now is to harness this strong political momentum to achieve tangible progress.

As we speak, government negotiators are meeting in Bangkok in UN-sponsored climate talks. There just 10 negotiating days before the conference opens here in December.

We have made significant progress -- at the Summit and in national capitals. But we are not there yet.

There is still a lot of work to be done, and not much time to do it.

Governments must table concrete proposals.

As Secretary-General, I will do everything possible to make Copenhagen a success.

That is why I convened the Summit. And that is why, as Copenhagen draws nearer, I am prepared to do more. I am willing to reconvene a small group of leaders in November to review the state of negotiations, and to consider detailed options for climate financing.

Prime Minister Rasmussen and I will stay in close contact on this and all other climate matters.

I will also set up a high-level panel early next year to articulate a vision for effectively integrating climate change into the development agenda.

We must reduce poverty as we foster climate-resilient green growth. One without the other is unacceptable.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the end of the day, the responsibility for sealing a deal in Copenhagen rests clearly on the shoulders of world leaders and their governments.

We have no excuses for inaction. We know we are the cause of the climate crisis. We must therefore provide the solution.

We can. And with Denmark's committed leadership, I am confident, we will.

I look forward to returning here in December, and sealing the deal on a more equitable, safe and prosperous future for all. A deal that that will cut greenhouse gas

emissions, promote green growth and support the most vulnerable as they adapt to change.

A deal that will stand as a beacon for a new multilateralism.

The past year has seen multiple global crises -- Food. Fuel. Flu. Financial.

Each has highlighted our interdependence. Each has emphasized the importance of multilateralism – a renewed multilateralism that delivers real results for people and nations in need.

Climate change, perhaps our greatest challenge, will require flexibility, ambition and trust among nations.

So will the other pressing issues of the day:

Peace in Afghanistan, the Middle East, Sudan and Somalia.

Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Creating a more equitable global economic and financial infrastructure.

If there is one lesson that we must learn from the climate crisis and our great challenges, it is this: we share one planet, one small blue speck in space. As people, as nations, as a species: we sink or swim together.

Let us seize the opportunities that history is giving us today, so that tomorrow's generations can look back and say: "Our leaders rose to the challenge. They did what was right."

Thank you.